



www.gourmetcouples.com

TWENTY EIGHTH YEAR

February, 2010

NEWS LETTER

#115

Gourmet Couples Schedule for 2010

March 13 – Old Family Recipe Party
March 28 – Planning Party, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
April 17 – Dinner Party
April 24 – Alternate Dinner Party
May 1 – Kentucky Derby Party, Dorothy and Dick host
May 15 – Army-Navy Club Restaurant, Ann and Dick host
June 6 – Strawberry Brunch, Shelly and Linda host
June 27 – Restaurant Visit – Location Virginia - TBA
July 11 – Planning Party – 6:00 – 8:00 pm
August 7 – Dinner Party
August 14 – Alternate Dinner Party
September 11 – Virginia Winery
October 2 – Crab Feast, Paula and Joe host
October 17 – Planning Party, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
October 30 – Halloween Party, Mitzi and Bob, host
November 6 – Dinner Party
November 13 – Alternate Dinner Party
December 5 – Restaurant Brunch – Location DC - TBA
January 8, 2011 – 12th Night Party

Old Family Recipe Party

On March 13, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., we will celebrate the favorite recipes and traditions of our families at the home of Cheryl and Dick.

Think about the old family recipes that you and your family love. It may be a recipe that you remember your mother or grandmother making. Or it could be a comfort food that you started making in your own family. It doesn't have to be fancy. The requirement is that it is important to you. And, most importantly, write up something briefly about the story behind the food and bring it to the party!!

A search of the internet came up with the following story about a woman and her family food tradition.

In Schroon Lake back in the 1930s through 1950s my family's favorite holiday dish was salt codfish. My father was an Irish Roman Catholic, and my Protestant mother seemed happy to accommodate her cooking to the many days of abstinence from meat in the pre-Vatican II era. That was easier said than done in the wintertime Adirondacks, where the only fresh fish came up through a hole in the ice. We needed a festive holiday meal, we couldn't have meat, and the fish sold in stores came in cans or boxes. We were saved by Gorton of Gloucester, which packaged salt codfish in wooden boxes. Mother soaked the fish overnight to get the salt out, then made a white sauce to which, ironically, she added salt. The dish was served piping hot over freshly baked potatoes. We loved it, and I still make it for Christmas Eve dinner.

As is usual for larger dinner parties, please prepare your old family recipe at home.

The club will provide appetizers and a nonalcoholic beverage. If you would like wine with dinner, please bring it to the party. Complete the coupon no later than March 4, 2009. Because Cheryl will be out of town during the first part of March, please send your response to: **Joan and Bob** . .

Thanks to Two Unsung Heroes – Joe and Jason (Joan)

Our special thanks to Joe MacCormack who through out these many years has been putting together our Gourmet Couples Newsletters. Joe has taken upon himself the Herculean task of publishing all of the recipes from our dinners and special parties. You old timers will remember that the Newsletters used to include only the "favorite" recipe of each dinner party. Joe scans all the recipes – and in some case has to badger us to provide him with copies. This is no small task and we owe Joe special, special thanks. He has been performing these duties – in addition to serving as treasurer - for many years.

Also, thanks to my nephew, Jason who lives in Aurora, Colorado. Jason set up our Greater Washington Gourmet Couples website some years ago and has been posting our newsletters each month, as well as updating the information contained in the website. Please take the time to review the site and provide us with suggestions on chances you may recommend.

Send your suggestions to Joan: joanjanshego@verizon.net

Planning Party March 28, 2010

A Planning Party for our April Dinner Sets is on March 28, 2010 from 6 to 8 PM.

The Culinary Institute of America Dinner Party

Our dinner party on February 20, 2010, hosted by Cheryl and Dick, focused on recipes from "Cooking at Home with The Culinary Institute of America." Cheryl picked up the book at the CIA bookstore during our CIA/Hyde Park trip last May.

Our menu was:

Roasted Pepper and Goat Cheese Canapés
Hummus
Spinach and Arugula Salad with Strawberries
Bibbi Bi (French Cream of Mussel Soup)
Lamb and Chicken Stew with Couscous
Joe's Homemade Bread
Grand Marnier Parfaits

We had a difficult time coming up with a favorite rec-

ipe, since the Roasted Pepper and Goat Cheese Canapés, Lamb and Chicken Stew, and French Cream of Mussel Soup were particularly – and equally - mouthwatering. So we recommend that you try them all!!

Roasted Pepper and Goat Cheese Canapés

(Prepared by Jura and Adolfas)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

- 2 Tablespoons golden raisins
- 2 Tablespoons dry sherry wine
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 Teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 Cup diced, seeded tomato
- 1/2 Red onion, thinly sliced
- 5 Kalamata olives, pitted and cut into strips
- 2 Tablespoons minced fresh cilantro, plus leaves for garnish
- 1/2 jalapeno, seeded and minced
- 1 Clove garlic, minced
- 1 Red bell pepper, roasted
- 1 Yellow bell pepper, roasted
- 1 Green bell pepper, roasted
- 8 Slices whole-wheat bread
- 1/2 Cup crumbled fresh goat cheese
- 1/4 Cup sour cream

Combine the raisins with the sherry and warm in a microwave oven for 40 seconds at full power. Or, combine in a small saucepan and warm over low heat. Allow the raisins to plump for about 10 minutes. Drain, reserving the liquid.

Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, mustard, 1/4, teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a large bowl. Add the tomato, onion, olives, minced cilantro, jalapeno and garlic and stir to combine. Let the dressing rest while preparing the bell peppers.

Remove and discard the skin, seeds, and stems from the roasted bell peppers. Cut the peppers lengthwise into 1/8 inch-wide strips and add to the dressing. Add the plumped raisins and toss well. Set aside to marinate for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Punch out 2 circles from each bread slice with a 2 inch round cutter. Transfer to a baking sheet and toast in the oven until evenly browned and crisp, 3-4 minutes.

Whisk together the goat cheese and sour cream and transfer to a piping bag fitted with a round tip (about 1/4 inch in diameter hole.)

To assemble the canapés, pipe the goat cheese mixture in a ring around the edges of the toasted rounds. Or, spread or spoon the goat cheese on the toast circles. Mound about 1 tablespoon of the pepper salad in the center of each canapé and top with a cilantro leaf.

Makes 16 hors d'oeuvres; 6-8 servings

Hummus

(Prepared by Lindsay and David)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

- 1-1/4 Cups cooked garbanzo beans, (chickpeas), or one
- 1 15 ounce can, rinsed and drained
- 2 Tablespoons tahini paste
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or to taste
- 1 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine the garbanzo beans, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, and 1 teaspoon salt in a food processor or blender and puree until a paste forms. Add water 1 tablespoon at a time and continue to puree until the mixture has a light, spreadable consistency, similar to mayonnaise.

Transfer the hummus to a bowl, taste, and season with lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Drizzle a little additional oil over the surface, if desired. Makes 4 servings

Spinach and Arugula Salad with Strawberries

(Prepared by Lindsay and David)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

Vinaigrette

- 1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil

- 2 Cups baby spinach leaves
- 2 Cups arugula leaves
- 1 Cup sliced strawberries

Freshly ground pepper

For the vinaigrette, measure the vinegars and salt into a salad bowl, then gradually add the oil while whisking until emulsified.

Add the greens to the vinaigrette and toss gently, using a lifting motion. When the greens are lightly coated, transfer to chilled plates, top with the strawberries, and finish with a generous grinding of pepper. Makes 4 servings

Bibbi Bi (French Cream of Mussel Soup)

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

- 1 Cup dry white wine
- 1 Tablespoon minced shallot
- 1 Teaspoon saffron threads, crushed
- 2 Pound mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- 4 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 yellow onion, minced
- 5 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 5 Cups fish, chicken, or vegetable broth
- 1 Spice sachet
- 1 Cup heavy cream or half-and-half
- 1 Large egg yolk

Salt and freshly ground white pepper

Combine the wine, shallot, and saffron in a large pot large enough to hold the mussels. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the mussels, cover the pot tightly, and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook the mussels for 5-6 minutes, shaking the pot occasionally. Remove the mussels from the pot as their shells open. Discard any that do not open. Separate the meat from the shells; refrigerate the meat and discard the shells. Strain the cooking liquid and reserve.

Melt the butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion and stir to coat evenly. Cover the pot and cook the onion until translucent, 3-4 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, to make a blond roux, about 5 minutes.

Add the mussel-cooling liquid and the broth gradually, whisking well to work out any lumps. Add the sachet and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, skimming occasionally and skimming foam from the surface as needed, until the soup is flavorful and thickened, about 45 minutes.

Remove and discard the Spice Sachet. Strain the soup through a fine-mesh sieve or a colander lined with cheesecloth. Return the soup to the stove and bring to a simmer.

Make a liaison by whisking the cream with the egg yolk in a bowl. Reduce the heat to low, stir about 1 cup of the hot soup into the liaison, then gradually stir the heated liaison into the soup. Cook over a low heat, stirring constantly until the soup reaches a bare simmer and is thickened.

Add the mussels to the soup and simmer until they are heated through. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Makes 6-8 servings

Spice Sachet:

5-6 cracked peppercorns

3-4 parsley stems

1 sprig fresh thyme or 1/2 tsp dried thyme

1 bay leaf

Place the herbs and spices on a square of cheesecloth large enough to contain them. Twist the corners of the cheesecloth together and tie securely with one end of a long piece of string. When adding to the pot, tie the other end of the string to the pot handle for easy removal later.

Lamb and Chicken Stew with Couscous

(Prepared by Joan and Bob)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

2 Pound boneless leg of lamb
 8 Skinless bone-in chicken thighs (4-5 oz each)
 Salt and freshly ground pepper
 3 Tablespoons olive oil
 1 yellow onion, diced
 4 cloves garlic, minced
 1 Tablespoon minced ginger root
 2 Teaspoons ground cumin
 2 Teaspoons ground turmeric
 1 Teaspoon ground coriander
 1/2 Teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
 2 bay leaves
 Pinch of saffron threads, crushed

1/8 Teaspoon ground cloves (optional)
 3 Cups chicken broth
 6 fresh or frozen artichoke hearts, halved
 2 Cups coarsely diced carrot
 2 Cups coarsely diced turnip
 3 Cups finely diced zucchini
 1 Cup finely diced green bell pepper
 One 15 ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), rinsed and drained
 4 plum (Roma) tomatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
 1 Cup fresh lima beans, boiled until tender and drained, or thawed frozen lima beans
 3 Cups couscous, cooked according to package directions

Open out the lamb leg and trim away excess fat and gristle. Cut into 2 inch cubes. Season the lamb and chicken with salt and pepper.

Heat the oil in a large, heavy Dutch oven over high heat. Sauté the lamb until lightly browned on all sides, about 3 minutes total. Remove and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium-high. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, cumin, turmeric, coriander, nutmeg, bay leaves, saffron, and cloves (if using) and sauté until evenly blended, about 2 minutes. Add the lamb and any juices released by the lamb, the chicken, and the broth. If using fresh artichoke hearts, add them now. Simmer, covered, until the lamb and chicken are just cooked through, about 40 minutes. Add the carrots and turnips and simmer, covered, until tender, another 15 minutes. If using frozen artichoke hearts, add them now.

Uncover, add the zucchini and bell pepper, and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garbanzo, tomatoes, and lima beans and simmer until all of the ingredients are tender and very hot, another 4 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

Mound the couscous and ladle the stew over the mound. Serve at once. Makes 10-12 Servings

Home Made Bread

(Prepared by Paula and Joe)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

Makes Large loaf bread

2 Cups water, lukewarm
 1-3/4 Ounces cake yeast (1/3 cup)
 5-3/4 Cups bread flour
 1 Tablespoon dark brown sugar
 2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 1 Tablespoon salt
 1 Egg white, lightly beaten
 2 Tablespoons sesame seeds

Place the water and yeast in the bowl of an electric mixer and allow the yeast to bloom for about 5 minutes. Using a dough hook attachment, add the flour and sugar to the water and mix on low speed until a dough starts to form. Drizzle the oil and salt into the dough and beat on medium speed

for 8 to 10 minutes, or until a smooth, firm, elastic dough is formed.

Transfer the dough to a lightly oiled bowl and spray the dough with a thin coating of cooking spray. Wrap the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside to proof in a warm, draft-free place for 1-1/2 hours or until doubled in size. Remove the plastic wrap, punch down and flatten the rounded dough with the heel of your hand. Roll the dough up tightly, sealing the seam well after each roll. The dough should be elongated and oval-shaped, with tapered and rounded (not pointed) ends.

Preheat the oven lined with a pizza stone to 425 degrees F. Alternately, an inverted baking sheet may be used in place of a pizza stone.

Place the dough on a baker's peel heavily dusted with semolina flour, or cornmeal, or alternately on an inverted baking sheet. Allow the dough to proof, loosely covered with a damp towel, for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size. Brush the dough with the egg white and sprinkle the sesame seeds over the top. Using a razor blade or sharp knife, score 3 (1/4-inch deep) slashes across the top of the dough at a 45 degree angle.

Spray the dough generously with water from a water bottle and place in the oven on the baking stone. Immediately close the oven and bake for 3 minutes. Open the oven door and spray the dough again with the water bottle. Close the oven door and bake for an additional 3 minutes before spraying the dough for a third time (the spraying of the dough will ensure a crisp golden brown crust). Bake the dough for 45 minutes, or until a hollow thud is heard when the bread is whacked with the bowl of a wooden spoon. Allow the bread to cool slightly before serving.

Note:

2-1/4 teaspoons of dry yeast = 1 package dry yeast = 1 cake yeast (.6 ounces)

3.93 teaspoons approx. 4 teaspoons of dry yeast

Grand Marnier Parfaits

(Prepared by Dorothy and Dick)

Cooking at home with The CIA, February 20, 2010

2 Cups heavy cream
8 Large egg yolks
3/4 Cup granulated sugar
5 Tablespoon plus 8 teaspoons Grand Marnier
Grated zest of 1 orange
Unsweetened cocoa powder for dusting (optional)
Confectioners' sugar for dusting (optional)

Whip the cream in a chilled bowl until it holds a soft peak when the whisk is turned upright. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Prepare eight 1/2 cup ramekins by wrapping the outside of each with a parchment paper collar extending 1 inch above the rim. Secure with tape or string. Set on a baking sheet.

Whip the egg yolks in the howl of a stand mixer Fitted with the whisk attachment or with a handheld mixer on

medium speed until light and thickened.

Meanwhile, combine the granulated sugar and 6 tablespoon water in a small, heavy saucepan and bring to a full boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the sugar syrup to the egg yolks. Continue whipping until the mixture cools to room temperature.

Fold the 5 tablespoon Grand Marnier and the orange zest into the egg yolk mixture. Add one-third of the reserved whipped cream to the egg-yolk mixture and gently fold until incorporated. Fold in the remaining whipped cream.

Pour the egg mixture into the ramekins to a depth of 1/2 inch above the rim of each ramekin. Freeze for 3-4 hours.

To serve, unwrap the collars from the ramekins. Pierce 2 holes through each parfait and pour 1/2 teaspoon Grand Marnier into each. If desired, use a sieve to dust with cocoa powder and confectioners' sugar and serve at once.

Blue Cheese and Onion Dip

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)

Planning Party, February 31, 2010

1 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream
2 tablespoons dry onion soup mix
1/4 to 1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese (1 to 2 ounces)
1 tablespoon milk (optional)
Vegetable dippers: carrot and celery sticks, cauliflower florets, green pepper strips

Stir together sour cream and soup mix in a mixing bowl, Stir in blue cheese. Chill till ready to serve. If mixture is too stiff after chilling, stir in milk. Serve with vegetable dippers. Makes 1-3/4 cups

Mushroom Treats

(Prepared by Paula and Joe)

Planning Party, February 31, 2010

4 Ounces cream cheese
1/4 Cup sour cream or less to make nice dip
2 Tablespoons chopped onion
1/2 Teaspoon Lowrys Season Salt
6 Slices bacon
1/2 Pound white medium large white mushrooms, more if needed

Combine first 4 ingredient and refrigerate.

Fry bacon and drain on paper towels, saving oil in pan. When cool, break up into small chips.

Carefully remove stems from mushrooms so mushrooms hold their shape. Wash carefully so water is not captured inside. Dry face down on paper towels

Place in bacon pan and steam slowly so the mushrooms hold their shape. When cooked place mushrooms on paper towels to cool. When cool fill with dip and top each with bacon. Place on serving plate as appetizers

**Cheryl's Beautiful Table Setting For
The Culinary Institute of America Dinner Party**

